

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 EB-07 COME-00 L-03 TRSE-00

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15

EUR-12 /064 W

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R 071215Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7739

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MASS, GB

SUBJ: SWIFTSHIPS BOAT, NGUENE

REF: (A) 0874, (B) 0880

1. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH HEAD OF GABONESE NAVY, COMMANDANT LEFEVRE, RE DELIVERY OF AMMUNITION DESCRIBED REFTEL A, EMBASSY LEARNED FOLLOWING DISTRESSING NEWS. LEFEVRE SAID THAT NGUENE HAD SPRUNG LEAKS IN STERN AND REAR PORTION OF HULL LAST NOVEMBER. LEAKS HAD INCREASED IN SERIOUSNESS AND BOAT HAD NOT BEEN SEAWORTHY FOR LAST SEVERAL MONTHS. RECENT UNDERWATER INSPECTION OF HULL REVEALED WHAT LEFEVRE DESCRIBED AS STRUCTURAL FAILURE DUE TO FAULTY CONSTRUCTION.

2. LEFEVRE POINTED OUT THAT SWIFTSHIPS SALES CONTRACT ONLY CARRIES THREE-MONTH GUARANTY. HE SAID, HOWEVER, FRENCH NAVAL AND LEGAL OPINION WAS THAT SOUNDNESS OF HULL WAS QUESTION GOING BEYOND MANUFACTURER'S GUARANTY. THEREFORE HE EXPECTED THAT GABONESE NAVY WOULD MAKE CLAIM FOR REPAIRS TO NGUENE'S HULL TO SWIFTSHIPS. SINCE BOAT NO LONGER NAVIGABLE, LEFEVRE BELIEVES ONLY PRACTICAL WAY FOR BOAT TO BE REPAIRED IS TO SHIP IT ON FREIGHTER TO US.

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3. LEFEVRE MENTIONED THAT GABONESE NAVY NOW PREPARING COMPLETE DOCUMENTATION OF THEIR CASE WHICH WOULD SOON BE ON PRESIDENT BONGO'S DESK. HE ADDED THAT UNDOUBTEDLY EMBASSY WOULD HEAR ABOUT THIS MATTER SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: REQUEST DEPARTMENT INFORM SWIFTSHIPS OF ABOVE INFORMATION AND ATTEMPT TO DETERMINE WHAT ACTION SWIFTSHIPS MIGHT TAKE IN CONNECTION WITH GOG'S CLAIM. IT APPEARS TO EMBASSY THAT IT WOULD BE MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO SWIFTSHIPS AND GABONESE NAVY IF THIS AFFAIR COULD BE SETTLED WITHOUT GOING THROUGH PRESIDENT AND STATE DEPARTMENT. DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO SUGGEST THAT SWIFTSHIPS' REPRESENTATIVE CONTACT COMMANDANT LEFEVRE (HE SPEAKS ONLY FRENCH) BY TELEPHONE (PORT GENTIL 533-79) OR TELEX TO SEE IF AMICABLE SOLUTION CAN BE WORKED OUT. PLEASE ADVISE RESULTS OF CONTACT WITH SWIFTSHIPS.DEJARNETTE

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## Message Attributes

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